

Message Text

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TAGS: BEXP, UR

SUBJ: POSSIBLE SERVICE CHARGE FOR COMMERCIAL OFFICE USE

REF: STATE 92083

1. ALTHOUGH EMBASSY ANXIOUS TO COOPERATE IN ANY EFFORT EASE
BUDETARY PROBLEMS IN CONNECTION WITH COMMERCIAL OFFICE, WE DO
NOT BELIEVE THAT IMPOSITION OF FEES FOR USE OF OFFICE'S FACILITIES
IS DESIRABLE SOLUTION. AT PRESENT, BUSINESSMEN WHO USE COMMERCIAL
OFFICE FACILITIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL ADDITIONAL COSTS WHICH
OFFICE INCURS. THIS INCLUDES, INTER ALIA, USE OF TELEX, XEROX,
HIRE OF INTERPRETERS, PRINTING COSTS, COSTS OF RECEPTIONS ETC.
AS FAR AS COMMERC-SPONSORED TRADE PROMOTIONAL EVENTS CONCERNED,
BUSINESS CONTRUBUTION FULLY COVERS ALL COSTS EXCEPT, AS WE UNDER-
STAND IT, IN CASE OF TRADE MISSIONS AND SO-CALLED "TECHNICAL/
SALES SEMINARS." AS FAR AS MOSCOW CONCERNED, WE WOULD BE PLEASED
TO SEE TRADE MISSIONS DROPPED FROM PROGRAM ENTIRELY IN
FAVOR OF SEMINAR/EXHIBITS WHICH ARE ENTIRELY SELF-FINANCING.
REGARDING "TECHNICAL-SALES SEMINARS" WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT
FORMAT FOR THESE EVENTS BE REVISED TO ELIMINATE BOTH ADVANCE
MAN, WHO SERVES LITTLE PURPOSE, AND SEMINAR CHAIRMAN, WHOSE
PRESENCE NOT REQUIRED.

2. TURNING TO OTHER COMMERCIAL OFFICE SERVICES TO BUSINESS, IT
WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO IMPOSE FEE FOR USE OF SEMINAR/EXHIBIT FACILITIES
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FOR BETWEEN-SHOW PROMOTIONS. HOWEVER, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT IM-

POSITION OF FEE WHICH WOULD BE LARGE ENOUGH TO HAVE MEANINGFUL IMPACT ON BUDGET WOULD LEAD TO SHARP DROP IN USE OF THESE FACILITIES BY U.S. FIRMS. PARTICULARLY FOR SMALLER FIRMS, WHICH SUFFER MOST SEVERELY FROM HIGH COST OF DOING BUSINESS IN USSR, AVAILABILITY OF SEMINAR/EXHIBIT FACILITIES WITHOUT FEES (ASIDE FROM COSTS OF INTERPRETERS, PRINTING, RECEPTIONS ETC) AND POSSIBILITY OF USING COMMERCIAL OFFICE AS BASE OF OPERATIONS ARE MAJOR ATTRACTIONS. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO INTRODUCE SLIDING SCALE OF FEES BASED ON TURNOVER (AS TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL HAS DONE), BUT WE WONDER WHETHER THIS WOULD BE FEASIBLE IN CASE OF U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICE. FINALLY, WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE PRACTICAL, QUITE APART FROM DESIRABILITY, TO IMPOSE FEES FOR OTHER OFFICE FACILITIES SUCH AS ROOMS FOR MEETINGS, USE OF ACTION OFFICE AREA AS PLACE TO WORK, USE OF LIBRARY ETC.

3. IN SUM, EMBASSY WOULD ARGUE STRONGLY AGAINST ADOPTION OF FEE SYSTEM ON GROUNDS THAT THIS WOULD HARM COMMERCIAL OFFICE PROGRAM AT TIME WHEN OVERALL OPERATIONS ARE DEVELOPING QUITE WELL. WE WOULD AGREE, OF COURSE, THAT THIS ISSUE MUST BE SEEN IN TERMS OF ALTERNATIVES, AND WE WOULD BE INTERESTING IN RECEIVING FROM WASHINGTON AN INDICATION OF THE DEGREE OF THE PROBLEM AS WELL AS THE OTHER SOLUTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION.

STOESSEL

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